The Ideal Candidate for School Library Media Specialist: Views from School Administrators, Library School Faculty, and MLS Students

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Preferred characteristics in applicants for school library media specialist (SLMS) positions are studied in this article from three perspectives, that of the library school faculty, the library school student, and the school administrator. Surveys were sent to public high school administrators in the states of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho; faculties of American Library Association (ALA)-accredited master of library science (MLS) programs; and students enrolled in ALA-accredited programs. Using a five-point scale, participants rated twenty-six qualities organized into five general groupings: education, experience, recommendations, involvement, and compatibilities. Faculty (n =27), students (n =142), and administrators (n =26) agreed that the most valued SLMS job candidate would have the ability to work well with others and possess excellent managerial and technical skills. Differences in the three groups' perspectives suggest a lack of common perception of the role of the SLMS among school administrators, MLS students, and library and information science faculty and a need to align visions with national guidelines for the role of school library media programs in the educational mission of the school.

In preparation for applying and interviewing for positions, hopeful school library media specialists (SLMSs) organize portfolios of their work, write cover letters, and create résumés, and their professors write letters highlighting the students' qualities that they believe will attract the interest of employers. To facilitate the best matches between SLMS positions and applicants, SLMS students, their faculty advisors, and school administrators responsible for hiring decisions need to share a vision of what constitutes a strong, if not ideal, candidate for an SLMS position. There is, however, a lack of research on what qualities or competencies school principals seek during the hiring process and how these competencies compare to the perceptions held by students and their faculties. Access to this information could enable SLMS candidates to better highlight their education and qualities to potential employers as well as guide MLS students and SLMS programs in selecting preprofessional experiences and training to better match school administrators' expectations. This information might also help to identify discrepancies in visions or misperceptions about the role of the SLMS and the school library media program in the schools.

While studies of the actual practices used in filling SLMS positions are uncommon in literature, much can be found about the perceptions of school principals in regard to SLMSs and their roles. Related literature can also be found which summarizes how school administrators select teaching staff, what public and academic libraries seek in hiring librarians, and what students and first-year teachers perceive to be the qualities principals look for in hiring teachers. These related studies may give insight into how principals might choose SLMSs.

Administrator perceptions of the roles of the SLMS are examined in several studies (Alexander, Smith, and Carey 2003; Edwards 1989; Wilson and Blake 1993). In 2003, Alexander, Smith, and Carey administered a survey to high school principals that found information literacy to be the most important role of an SLMS in a high-school setting. A survey performed by Edwards (1989) showed that principals view the most important skills of an SLMS to be in the areas of materials selection, library management, reference/resource to students, and reading promotion. Instruction was ranked only seventh in this survey. The national survey conducted by Wilson and Blake (1993) revealed that less than 10 percent of the respondents felt that there was adequate training available regarding the role of an SLMS in the educational requirements to become a principal; 78 percent of those surveyed admitted that they should have received more training about the function of SLMSs in the school system.

A number of studies consider what academic libraries look for in hiring librarians (Matarazzo 2001; White 1999; Womack 1997). Some of the studies show a change in hiring practices, with more recent searches seeking candidates with additional credentials. Of these studies, one may have implications for practices in hiring SLMSs. In 1995 Matarazzo (2001) found that a majority of libraries would consider hiring an academic librarian who did not have a master of library science (MLS) degree; in 2001, however, 98 percent of the universities surveyed required that candidates for librarian positions have an MLS, or at least have prior experience in addition to being in the process of completing an MLS degree. It appears from this study that credentials, specifically from ALA-accredited programs, have increasing importance in the hiring process for at least academic librarians.

Several researchers (Braun et al. 1987; Roden and Cardina 1996; Ralph et al. 1998; Warren and Peel 1998; Cain-Caston 1999; Abernathy, Forsyth, and Mitchell 2001; Stronge and Hindman 2003) have studied the criteria used by school principals when hiring teachers. Roden and Cardina (1996) found that administrators prefer teaching candidates who have: (1) a substantial background in instructional theory; (2) experience with diverse classroom populations; and (3) shown evidence of superior knowledge in the subject area to be taught. The ability to integrate technology into instruction and skill in using assessment tools are qualities administrators want new hires to develop, but not necessarily acquire before hiring.

Cain-Caston (1999) asked elementary and secondary principals in North Carolina to identify the characteristics that they most desire in teacher candidates. The top two hiring considerations for principals are successful student-teaching experience and good communication skills (both oral and written).

Ralph et al. (1998) completed similar research on the perceptions of school principals in Canada. The researchers found strong communication skills, high-quality teaching methods, and evidence of a successful internship program were the top characteristics sought in applicants. These researchers also found a pattern emerged from the literature that, like administrators, "teacher

supervisors generally rate the human dimension in teaching and supervision higher than they rate the task aspect" (Ralph et al. 1998, Findings section, ¶2).

Warren and Peel's (1998) survey asked student teachers to pinpoint qualities that they felt made them marketable. Students named computer literacy, the ability to collaborate with other teachers, innovative teaching strategies, "spunk," multicultural perspective, and excellent classroom management skills as being the most important qualities for teachers entering the education field.

In another study, Forsyth and Abernathy (1998, as cited in Abernathy, Forsyth, and Mitchell 2001) found that many entering the field of teaching for the first time felt unsure of what school personnel directors were looking for in their employees. Their follow-up research in 2001 found that administrators tended to prefer candidates with good communication skills first and foremost, as well as strong classroom management skills. Principals also highly appreciated prior teaching experience that came with praise from former employers.

Conclusions drawn from the relevant literature reviewed tend to suggest that there has been a shift toward stronger degree requirements for librarians (Matarazzo 2001) but a shift away from a focus on content knowledge (Roden and Cardina 1996) to a focus on communication skills in hiring teachers (Ralph et al. 1998; Forsyth and Abernathy 1998, as cited in Abernathy, Forsyth, and Mitchell 2001; Cain-Caston 1999). Professional certification standards for teachers that encompass standards of subject knowledge, such as those represented by the relevant degree, coupled with the requirement to hold the appropriate certification, would free administrators to move beyond a focus on degree and subject knowledge to a focus on other skills when considering teacher candidates.

While these qualities most sought after by principals when hiring teachers could apply to all teaching staff within a district, including SLMSs, the literature does not provide evidence that principals consider SLMSs as teachers when it comes to the hiring process. Further, the literature provides us with no indication that SLMS programs, the students enrolled in those programs, and the principals that hire school librarians share a vision of what makes for a good SLMS or a good school library media program.

Method

To elicit perceptions of what makes a preferred candidate for an SLMS position, a list of candidate qualities was compiled from the literature, using primarily the Abernathy, Forsyth, and Mitchell study (2001), and supplemented with items gathered through observation. The list was then tested for understandability, ease of completion, and comprehensiveness. Using the input from the test group, a survey was constructed listing twenty-six qualities divided into five categories: education, experience, recommendations, involvement, and compatibilities. The resulting survey asked participants to rate if they considered each quality to be of great importance, fair importance, some importance, minimal importance, or no importance when hiring a SLMS. Surveys were sent to the following three groups: (1) public high school administrators from the Pacific Northwest states of Washington, Idaho, and Oregon; (2) library and information science (LIS) faculty from American Library Association (ALA)-accredited programs in the United States; and (3) graduate students participating in ALA-accredited LIS programs in the United States. Surveys accompanied by cover letters were either mailed with

return addressed, stamped envelopes or e-mailed to participants in each of the three sample groups with instructions that completed surveys be returned within a few days. Each participant received a guarantee of anonymity. Completed surveys were received from twenty-six high school administrators, twenty-seven LIS faculty members, and 142 MLS students.

Perceptions of the preferred characteristics in applicants for SLMS were sought from three perspectives: the school administrator, the library school faculty member, and the library school student. To elicit perceptions from administration, surveys were mailed to all high school principals in Washington state (n=230). In addition, surveys were e-mailed to principals in Oregon (n=117), and Idaho (n=44) public schools listing the principals' e-mail addresses on their school Web sites.

According to statistics found through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES 2004) for the 1999–2000 school year, these three Northwest states are fairly representative of our national practices. For example, of the public schools in the U.S., 91.6 percent have a school library media center; of the public schools in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, 91.7, 95.5, and 87.8 percent, respectively, have school library media centers. NCES defines a school media center as "an organized collection of printed and/or audiovisual and/or computer resources in an elementary or secondary school which is administered as a unit, is located in a designated place or places, and makes resources and services available to students, teachers, and administration" whether it is called "a library, media center, resource center, information center, instructional materials center, learning resource center, or some other name." School library media centers in both public and charter schools are included in the NCES survey.

The three Northwest states do differ from the national averages for school library employees possessing the master of library science (MLS) degree or its equivalent and employees with a bachelor's degree. Of all public school libraries in the U.S., 41.6 percent employ library workers with an MLS degree; of all Washington, Oregon, and Idaho public school libraries, 29.6, 29.5, and 15.6 percent, respectively, employ library workers with MLS degrees. [It should be noted that Washington and Idaho do not require a master's degree for school media certification and Oregon requires it only for stage II certification (Thomas and Perritt 2003).] Of all public school libraries in the U.S., 19.9 percent employ library workers with bachelor degrees; of all Washington, Oregon, and Idaho public school libraries, 21.3, 23.1, and 37.3 percent, respectively, employ library workers who hold bachelor degrees.

To elicit perceptions from LIS faculty, deans from ALA-accredited library and information schools were contacted. Using the directory found at the ALA's Web site (2004), listed deans or program directors were each e-mailed the same survey and instructions asking them to distribute the survey to LIS faculty members for completion. In addition, individual LIS faculty members from each school (n=713) were contacted directly through an e-mail containing the cover letter and survey. The survey requested that faculty members reflect their opinions of what qualities were most important in SLMS candidates, not what they believed might be the opinion of high school administrators.

To elicit perceptions from graduate students from ALA-accredited library science programs, library school electronic discussion list administrators were contacted (n=29) at schools having such a service in order to receive permission to post a request for student participants either currently enrolled in the program or recently graduated (within the last nine months). Students

did not have to be associated with the school library track of the information science graduate program to participate. This method allowed students to be polled who were taking part in the discussion list environment, yet who might not be taking classes over the summer when the study was conducted. Students who expressed interest in participation were e-mailed a survey. As with the LIS faculty survey, students were requested to reflect their own opinions of what qualities were most important for SLMS candidates to possess, not what they believed might be the opinion of high school administrators.

Results

Each one of the twenty-six qualities was rated as to whether the participant (administrator, faculty member, student) felt it was of great importance (5), fair importance (4), some importance (3), minimal importance (2), or no importance (1) when hiring a SMLS (see table 1).

Table 1. Mean Ratings of Importance of Twenty-six Qualities in Hiring SLMSs (by Perspective: Administrators, LIS Faculty, LIS Students)

	Administrators		LIS Faculty		LIS Students		Overall*	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Category 1: Education								
MLS degree	3.85	13	**4.73**	**3**	**4.60**	**3**	**4.39**	6
Library endorsement on teaching certificate	**4.22**	9	**4.69**	**4**	3.80	14	**4.24**	10
Strong young adult literature background	**4.19**	10.5	**4.33**	8	**4.16**	9	**4.23**	11
Impressive array of classes over course of education	3.74	17.5	3.63	18	3.93	13	3.77	15
Graduated from a respected university program	3.56	19	3.85	16	3.73	16	3.71	17
High G.P.A.	3.44	21	3.52	19	3.56	17	3.51	20
Graduated w/ honors or earned other awards	3.15	25	2.74	24.5	3.06	25	2.98	25
Category 2: Experience								
Successful internship program completion	3.89	12	**4.37**	7	**4.07**	11	**4.11**	13
Previous successful teaching position	3.74	17.5	**4.11**	15	3.37	21	3.74	16
Previous successful school library position	3.37	22	3.48	20	3.42	19	3.42	21
Previous successful library position	3.22	24	2.74	24.5	3.16	23	3.04	24
Category 3: Recommendations								
Recommendation from previous school personnel	**4.70**	**4**	**4.26**	10.5	3.94	12	**4.30**	8
Recommendation from internship mentor	**4.19**	10.5	**4.19**	12.5	**4.11**	10	**4.16**	12
Positive evaluation from university faculty	3.78	16	**4.26**	10.5	3.75	15	3.93	14

Category 4: Involvement

Involvement in professional organizations	3.50	20	3.78	17	3.40	20	3.56	18
Evidence of volunteer work w/ children or young adults	3.12	26	2.93	22	3.21	22	3.09	22
Previous district involvement	3.27	23	2.85	23	3.10	24	3.07	23
Desire to become involved in the district's extra-curricular activities	2.85	14	2.22	26	3.00	26	2.69	26

Category 5: Skills

Strong technology skills with knowledge of classroom integration	**4.77**	**3**	**4.48**	**6**	**4.73**	**2**	**4.66**	**2**
Evidence of strong managerial skills	**4.81**	**2**	**4.52**	**5**	**4.47**	**4**	**4.60**	**3**
Evidence of excellent teaching skills	**4.38**	**8**	**4.78**	**2**	**4.44**	**5**	**4.53**	**4**
Evidence of excellent classroom management skills	**4.65**	**5**	**4.37**	**9**	**4.36**	**6**	**4.46**	**5**
Evidence of creativity	**4.46**	**7**	**4.15**	**14**	**4.20**	**7**	**4.27**	**9**

Category 6: Compatibility

Ability to work well w/ others	**4.96**	**1**	**4.92**	**1**	**4.77**	**1**	**4.88**	**1**
Educational philosophy in alignment w/ district	**4.59**	**6**	**4.19**	**12.5**	**4.23**	**8**	**4.34**	**7**
Familiar w/ community	3.81	15	3.26	21	3.51	18	3.53	19

*Average of three group means: administrators, LIS faculty, and LIS students

All three groups viewed the following nine qualities as being of at least fair importance (M ≥4.0):

- ability to work with others (overall, 4.88; administrators, 4.96; faculty, 4.92; and students, 4.77);
- strong technology skills with knowledge of classroom (overall, 4.66; administrators, 4.77; faculty, 4.48; and students, 4.73);
- evidence of strong managerial skills (overall, 4.60; administrators, 4.81; faculty, 4.52; and students, 4.47);
- evidence of excellent teaching skills (overall, 4.53; administrators, 4.38; faculty, 4.78; and students, 4.44);
- evidence of excellent classroom management skills (overall, 4.46; administrators, 4.65; faculty, 4.37; and students, 4.36);
- educational philosophy in alignment with district (overall, 4.34; administrators, 4.59; faculty, 4.19; and students, 4.23);
- evidence of creativity (overall, 4.27; administrators, 4.46; faculty, 4.15; and students, 4.20);
- strong young adult (YA) literature background (overall, 4.23; administrators, 4.19; faculty, 4.33; and students, 4.16); and

- recommendation from internship mentor (overall, 4.16; administrators, 4.19; faculty, 4.19; and students, 4.11).

Designating criteria that averaged midway between great (5) and fair (4) importance as "important" criteria (M ≥4.5), the authors found administrators view the following six criteria as important when considering applicants for SLMS positions:

- ability to work well with others (4.96);
- evidence of strong managerial skills (4.81);
- strong technology skills with knowledge of classroom integration (4.77);
- recommendation from previous school personnel (4.70);
- evidence of excellent classroom management skills (4.65); and
- educational philosophy in alignment with district (4.59).

LIS faculty view the following five criteria as important (M ≥4.5):

- ability to work well with others (4.92);
- evidence of excellent teaching skills (4.78);
- an MLS degree (4.73);
- library endorsement on teaching certificate (4.69); and
- evidence of strong managerial skills (4.52).

LIS students view the following three criteria as important:

- ability to work well with others (4.77);
- strong technology skills with knowledge of classroom integration (4.73); and
- an MLS degree (4.60).

A candidate's ability to work well with others was the top-rated quality in each of the three surveyed groups, and it is the only quality that all three groups (administrators, faculty, students) agreed was important (M ≥4.5). Both administrators and faculty agreed that evidence of strong managerial skills was important; administrators and students agreed that having strong technology skills with knowledge of classroom integration is an important consideration. Pooling together their top considerations, faculty and students did not rate as important (M ≥4.5) half of the considerations rated as important by administrators.

Discussion

Two questions of particular interest are: (1) how well does the available literature represent the current thinking regarding qualities most desirable in applicants for SLMSs; and (2) how well does the thinking of students and their faculty represent that of administrators regarding qualities most desirable in SLMS applicants?

While the authors of this article did not find studies that specifically addressed SLMS students or faculty perspectives of the key qualities for prospective SLMSs, they did find studies that determined some new teachers were unsure of what schools sought in their employees (Forsyth and Abernathy 1998, as cited in Abernathy, Forsyth, and Mitchell 2001), while other new teachers believed computer skills, classroom management and teaching skills, and interpersonal

skills (collaboration and multicultural perspective) would make them marketable (Warren and Peel 1998). There is overlap, although not an exact match, in the literature and the current study. Students a half decade ago and today believe that strong interpersonal skills and technology skills will aid them in getting a job in a school.

The literature suggests that administrators most value the following six qualities:

1. a background in instructional theory;
2. experience with diverse classroom populations;
3. evidence of superior knowledge in the subject area being taught (Roden and Cardina 1996);
4. successful student teaching or teaching experience;
5. good oral and written communication skills (Cain-Caston 1999; Abernathy, Forsyth, and Mitchell 2001; and Ralph et al. 1998); and
6. strong classroom management skills (Abernathy, Forsyth, and Mitchell 2001).

Comparing these six qualities to the top-valued qualities ($M \geq 4.0$) by administrators in this study, the authors found strong classroom management skills were valued in the literature and in the current study. The preference for successful student teaching or teaching experience found in the literature could be grouped, if not directly equated, with a recommendation from previous school personnel in this study. The current study did not ask participants to rank the importance of a background in instructional theory, experience with diverse populations, knowledge in the subject area being taught, or communication skills. However, administrators' strong support for the ability to work well with others could suggest that these other people skills (working with diverse populations and communication skills) might also have been highly rated. While the literature (qualities valued in hiring of teachers) and the current study (qualities valued in hiring of SLMS) do not consider exactly the same attributes, the authors found that people skills and management skills are valued in both the literature and in this study. What becomes problematic is verifying the finding in the literature that evidence of superior knowledge in the subject area being taught is highly valued by administrators. Qualities in the current study that might be used as measures of subject-area knowledge are the MLS degree, library endorsement on teaching certificate, and, to some extent, a strong background in young adult (YA) literature. While knowledge of YA literature is certainly needed, such knowledge does not represent the range of skills and knowledge needed by SLMSs. Some states have strong (or are strengthening) requirements for the school library media endorsement on their teaching certificates, others do not (Thomas and Perritt 2003). Therefore, the ability of certification to represent subject knowledge may depend upon the state issuing the endorsement. Of the three qualities (MLS degree, SLMS endorsement, background in YA literature), the MLS degree appears to be the better indicator of training in librarianship. Yet, administrators view the MLS as the least important candidate quality and the only one of less than fair importance ($M<4$). Certification endorsement and background in YA literature were rated about equal in importance ($M=4.2$). (If administrators viewed school media endorsement on the teaching certificate to also represent evidence of knowledge of librarianship represented by the MLS degree, the authors would expect SLMS endorsement to be rated equal to if not higher than the MLS.) This suggests that administrators might not have a clear understanding of the duties of the SLMS or of the training assumed in the MLS degree and may have a narrow view of the role of the school library media program. It is not far-fetched that administrators might lack these understandings as some

teachers "still don't understand the value of a library media specialist—let alone the significance of properly identifying, evaluating, and using information" (Whelan 2003, 50).

From the administrators' ratings, one can construe their view of the role of the SLMS in the school. Managerial skill, technology know-how and application, and sociability are the three broad and most-valued characteristics (M $\geq$4.5). This suggests that administrators see SLMSs or school librarians as managers of their duty areas. However, evidence of teaching skill (M=3.74), school media endorsement on the teaching certificate (M=4.22), and an MLS degree (M=3.85) were not valued as important (M $\geq$4.5), suggesting that perhaps administrators do not view school librarianship as a knowledge area-as they might view the need for a physics teacher to have a degree and certification in physics-nor do they view teaching as a function of the SMLS. That is, one might surmise that administrators view the running of the school library media program as requiring primarily coordination, cooperation, recordkeeping, and housekeeping of the school library media center.

Faculty, on the other hand, highly rate the need for an SLMS candidate to possess an MLS degree and school media certification, as well as excellent teaching skills. Faculty rate management skills and strong technology skills lower than do administrators. One might surmise from this that perhaps faculty view the SLMS more as special-subjects teacher and less as a facilities director and resource for technology outside the media center or library.

Students appeared to have a perception that differs from their faculty. Further, the students' perspective of which qualities are most valued in hiring considerations is a closer match than is the faculty's to the view of the administrators. This suggests that students have either greater exposure to a perspective similar to administrators or have greater acceptance for this perspective.

It is of interest that, overall, administrators rated faculty recommendations as less important while highly rating recommendations from previous school personnel. This may suggest that administrators are more interested in evidence of real-world success than of academic success or the potential for success in the real world.

While the goal of the current study was to determine if administrators, faculty, and students share expectations of which qualities advantage an applicant in a job search, the findings suggest that a more pressing goal is to determine if administrators, faculty, and students have a shared and realistic view of the role of the SLMS in the curriculum, and therefore, in the school. Certainly, if administrators do not have a complete picture of the role of the SLMS and value a limited set of qualifications, then it is possible the best candidates for the position might be overlooked. On the other hand, if applicants (and their faculty advisors) have a limited view of the qualifications that lead to further consideration and hiring by school administrators, then students may be submitting applications that overlook some of their valued and defining qualities.

Recalling AASL/AECT's *Information Power,* which outlines the role of the school library media program, one might expect all groups examined in the current study to value most highly qualities of creating materials and providing training for a wide range of learners (instructional design, multicultural perspective, and teaching skills), skillful strategic planning and collaboration with various groups (executive administration), and a thorough knowledge of the role of information in society and the day-to-day lives of the school's students, faculty, and staff

(subject knowledge, subject certification, nationally accredited library degrees). Among the ratings of the three groups (administrators, faculty, and students), faculty had the closest alignment with the goals of *Information Power*.

Administrators in this study, overall, express a narrow view of the SLMS and of the role of the school library media program in the educational mission of the school (see also Brown and Petrus unpublished), the literature suggests that this is an artifact of their own educational training for school administration. In a depiction by Hartzell (2002), a review was made of the education of school principals in regard to the school library. Hartzell remarked that the courses required to become a school principal speak very little to the value that a strong library program can add to a school. In fact, Hartzell (2002) pointed out that the one area where school libraries are mentioned is in school law curricula where libraries are seen as potential threats to the school when copyright and censorship issues arise. "This leaves many administrative students with the impression that school libraries are legal time bombs instead of with the impression that school librarians can make significant contributions to a new principal's success" (Hartzell 2002, ¶11).

ALA's *Information Power* is the current national guideline for the role the school library media program and, therefore, the role the SLMS should have in schools. This current study suggests that library school faculty perspectives of valued qualities in applicants for SLMS positions support *Information Power,* at least in areas addressed by this study. Administrators and students, however, show a less supportive perspective of the SLMS. This suggests that school administrators, as well as school library media majors, need a better introduction to and understanding of the school library media program, centers, and specialists.

Cain-Caston (1999) and Ralph et al. (1998), in their research studies on administration practices in hiring teachers, offer some ideas that the authors can adapt for school administrators, LIS faculty, and LIS students going into the school library media profession. Cain-Caston (1999) stressed a need for offering annual seminars to students during their preservice educations to keep them abreast of current hiring practices. Ralph et al. (1998) related the importance of a collaborative effort on the parts of teachers, administrators, and university faculty to unify curriculum taught to preservice teachers. One way to implement these suggestions, including an introduction to libraries for administrators, is through annual local seminars for the three groups, perhaps hosted by state educational media associations (professional associations of SLMSs). In seminars, administrators would learn about innovative ways that SLMSs are being used in education today as well as become more aware of managerial and technological demands of these professionals and the goals established in *Information Power.* In turn, the administrators would share their ideas about the most important qualities they are looking for in their SLMSs, giving students a glimpse at future job expectations and letting their opinions have an impact on future university course offerings. Students would come away from this type of seminar with a clearer perspective of their future roles in schools, administrators would have clearer ideas of what the library program can do for their schools, and faculty could define gaps in a common understanding and vision that might be addressed through the library school curriculum, including service courses or units for administrators and teachers.

While this study overall found that students have a better idea than LIS faculty of what gets one hired as a SLMS, it is the faculty who know better than the administrators and students the role of the school library media program and specialists in the schools, and therefore what qualities those who are hired should have. If administrators and school staffs are better informed of the

goals established in *Information Power,* administrators can have a broader understanding of the qualities that will ensure the best school library media programs in their schools and applicants will know the qualities to better highlight and document in their applications. The schools and their students, as well as their surrounding communities, will be the ultimate beneficiaries.

For now, SLMS applicants need to consider preparing applications that both fulfill the current perceptions of administrators and help administrators gain a more balanced view of the role of school library media program and the SLMS in their schools. The applicant can provide real-world evidence of successful performance in areas administrators most value and also add in some background from, for example, *Information Power* and the literature that documents the role of the school library media program in strengthening learning outcomes in schools, and provide administrators with real-world evidence of successful performance in these additional areas. Researchers need to consider such pilot projects as the seminars outlined above, using pre- and post-testing to document changes in attitudes and values toward the role of the school library media program in schools and the qualities sought in hiring SLMSs.

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